

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 018561

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT RABAT 5961 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ALGIERS

MADRID 09 DEC 75

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 5961

EXDIS

DEPT PASS INFO SECDEF FOR ISA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS MO

SUBJECT: POLICY: MUSLO PROGRAM

REF: A) STATE 214893; B) STATE 284179

1. WE REALIZE FINAL CURTAIN HAS NOT YET FALLEN ON SPANISH SAHARA
DRAMA. NEVERTHELESS, ENOUGH OF THE ACT HAS ALREADY BEEN
PLAYED OUT TO ENABLE US TO ACCEPT KING HASSAN'S ARGUMENT THAT
MOROCCO'S RELATIONS WITH SPAIN ARE ON A SOUND FOOTING AND
EVEN TO ACCEPT AS PLAUSIBLE HIS INSISTENCE THAT THERE IS AN
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AFFINITY OF INTERESTS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES THAT WILL BE

BROADENED AND EXPANDED IN PERIOD TO COME. THIS EMERGENCE OF A FRIENDLY AND COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES, BOTH FRIENDLY TO U.S., THAT STRADDLE THE STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR IS INCONTESTABLY VERY MUCH IN THE UNITED STATES' REGIONAL INTERESTS. MEANWHILE, RELIEF OF EARLIER ACTION ACCOMPANYING ONGOING US-SPANISH BASE NEGOTIATIONS HAS ALSO HELPED CLEAR THE AIR.

2. EMBASSY BELIEVES IT IS NOW TIME FOR USG TO SET ASIDE RECENT DOUBTS AND RESERVATIONS AND PROCEED, STEADILY AND FIRMLY, TO IMPLEMENT THE MOROCCAN MILITARY MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. WE ARE NOT ARGUING FOR MAJOR NEW DEPARTURES, BUT RATHER FOR GOING AHEAD DURING PLANNED TIME FRAME OF NEXT THREE-FOUR YEARS WITH WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE DETERMINED TO DO, AS WELL AS ACTING UPON EXISTING MOROCCAN REQUESTS THAT ARE NOT YET APPROVED. THIS PROGRAM, IT WILL BE RECALLED, IS DESIGNED NOT TO UPSET STRATEGIC BALANCE WITH ALGERIA, BUT RATHER TO HELP TOWARD RESTORING IT. WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THIS PROGRAM WILL CONTRIBUTE TO REGIONAL STABILITY IN THE PROCESS. ANY BACKING OFF OR PROTRACTED DELAY ON OUR PART, ON THE OTHER HAND, WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO MOROCCAN MILITARY WEAKNESS AND COULD ONLY ENGENDER POWER VACUUM HERE THAT WOULD TEMPT NOT ONLY ALGERIA, BUT POTENTIALLY ALSO USSR (WHICH HAS NOT BEEN SHOWING NOTABLE RESTRAINT ELSEWHERE AS REGARDS INTERVENTION IN REGIONAL DISPUTES).

3. ONE OUTSTANDING CASE IN POINT AT THIS TIME IS THE PENDING MOROCCAN REQUEST FOR A LETTER OF OFFER FOR F-5E/F AIRCRAFT (REFTEL A). WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND MOVING AHEAD ON THIS ITEM IMMEDIATELY.

4. WE HAVE TAKEN NOTE OF DEPT'S GENERAL CONCERN, E.G., AS EXPRESSED IN FINAL PARAGRAPH OF REFTTEL B, THAT IN MEETING MOROCCO'S PERCEIVED NEEDS FOR MODERN MILITARY EQUIPMENT WITHIN ENVISIONED LIMITS, WE MAY BE ENCOURAGING MOROCCANS TO UNDERTAKE A STRAIN ON THEIR PAYMENT CAPABILITIES THAT THEIR GENERAL RESOURCE OUTLOOK MAY NOT JUSTIFY. WE PLAN A DETAILED SUBMISSION ON THIS ISSUE IN NEAR FUTURE. FOR THE MOMENT, WISH NOTE FOLLOWING KEY POINTS:

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A. BASIC DECISION ON PRIORITY MOROCCO SHOULD GIVE ARMS PURCHASES IS MOROCCANS', NOT OURS. WE CAN REST ASSURED THAT AS LONG AS THEY FEEL MENACED BY HOSTILE NEIGHBOR THEIR OWN PRIORITIES WILL PUT GUNS AHEAD OF BUTTER. ERGO, MOROCCANS ARE GOING TO GET ARMS SOMEWHERE, WHATEVER THE IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENTAL AND OTHER PRIORITIES. IN THIS ASPECT OF MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP, WE SEE OUR ROLE AS ESSENTIALLY THAT OF ADVISING MOROCCANS AS TO HOW MODERNIZATION PROGRAM CAN BE

MOST PRUDENTLY AND ECONOMICALLY IMPLEMENTED IN CONTEXT OF
ESTABLISHED U.S. AND MOROCCAN INTERESTS.

B. FOREIGN EXCHANGE POSITION FOR MOROCCO OVER NEXT COUPLE OF
YEARS IS ADMITTEDLY TIGHT (RABAT 4870, PARA 3). LONGER TERM
RECOVERY OF DEMAND FOR PHOSPHATES AND SOLID BORROWING PROSPECTS
TO BRIDGE CURRENT MARKET SOFTENING BODES WELL FOR MOROCCAN
SOLVENCY. WE HAVE, MOREOVER, REASON TO BELIEVE THAT MOROCCANS
ARE JUSTIFIED IN EXPECTATIONS THAT OIL-RICH FRIENDLY ARAB
GOVERNMENTS, NOTABLY SAUDI ARABIA, WILLING AND ABLE TO FOOT A
GOOD BIT OF THE BILL FOR MOROCCAN MILITARY MODERNIZATION
PROGRAM.

5. RECOMMENDATION: WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT USG WITHOUT
DELAY PROCEED WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF MILITARY MODERNIZATION
PROGRAM AND, IN PARTICULAR, TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO FURNISH
LETTER OF OFFER FOR F-5E/F AIRCRAFT. WE HAVE BEEN HEARING FROM
GOM THAT MOROCCAN AIR FORCE PERCEIVES A NEED FOR THESE
AIRCRAFT WITH SHORTEST POSSIBLE DELIVERY TIME. POSITIVE SIGN
FROM US WOULD BE ESPECIALLY WELCOME TO GOM AT THIS CRITICAL
STAGE IN MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN TENSION, AND WOULD HELP SOLIDIFY
OVERALL US-MOROCCAN RELATIONSHIP.
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